

REPLY OF THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO THE  
BRITISH AMBASSADOR.

September 21st, 1937.

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur:

With reference to the incident of the wounding of His Britannic Majesty's Ambassador to China, Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, concerning which I made an ad interim reply in my Note under the date of September 6th, 1937, I now have the honour to inform Your Excellency that the inquiry in Shanghai and its vicinity having been completed the Japanese Government desire to make the following reply:

2. As the result of most careful investigations it has been established that on August

Page 126

26th at 2.35 p.m., two Japanese planes machine-gunned and bombed two motor-cars which were believed, in all sincerity, to be military busses or trucks carrying officers or soldiers of the Chinese army at a point three kilometres southeast of Kating, where the Chinese forces were concentrated and since August 18th, not only had Japanese aeroplanes made repeated attacks upon them but a number of aerial combats between the Japanese and Chinese planes had taken place.

3. Owing to the difficulty, in present circumstances, of conducting an investigation on the spot, there has been some slight discrepancy in the various reports received as to the position of the Ambassador's motor-car at the time when he was wounded, but it was ascertained that no Japanese aeroplane had made a machine-gun attack or dropped a bomb in the locality where the Ambassador was first reported to have been wounded.

However, careful study made simultaneously by the Japanese and British authorities leads to the conclusion that the position of the motor-car in question might have been to the southward of Kating, instead of 6 miles south of Taitsang as stated in an earlier British report.

4. In the light of all these circumstances, the Japanese Government consider that the incident may have been caused by Japanese planes which mistook the Ambassador's motor-car as a military bus or truck. As the wounding of the Ambassador may thus have been

Page 127

due to the action, however involuntary, of Japanese aircraft, the Japanese Government desire to convey to His Britannic Majesty's Government a formal expression of their deep regret.

5. As regards the question of the punishment of the aviator concerned, it is needless to say that the Japanese Government would take suitable steps whenever it was established that Japanese aviators killed or wounded, intentionally or through negligence nationals belonging to a third country.

... in ... note of September 6th,  
instructions have been sent again to the Japanese forces in  
China to exercise the greatest care in safeguarding non-  
combatants, it being the desire and policy of the Japanese  
Government to limit, as far as this can possibly be done, the  
dangers to non-combatants resulting from the existence of  
hostilities in China.

I avail myself of this opportunity to renew to Your  
Excellency the assurances of my highest consideration.

His Excellency

The Right Honourable Sir Robert L. Creigie, K.C.M.G.,  
His Britannic Majesty's Ambassador to Japan.

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Page 127